Christian Community

Volume 7 No. 1 January, 1955

Some Things Church People Can Do

1. Plan some type of observance for Race Relations Sunday, February 13 in your church. Secure, if possible, a speaker from a different racial or cultural group than your own. Attend some community Race Relations program during the week of February 13 to February 20. Arrange a pulpit exchange if possible.
2. Make use of the Race Relations Sunday materials distributed by our denomination and the National Council of Churches for study and discussion.
3. Cultivate friendships with minority groups. You will enrich your own experience and discover facts about your community you did not know. This can be done through individuals, with women's or men's groups, or any one else in the church.
4. Use our staff which is available to help churches explore the meaning of Christian faith for group relations, develop inclusive programs in communities of changing population and further justice and Brotherhood among racial groups. Our Commission will also be pleased to provide resource materials to those who are interested. Cooperate with social and civic groups in your community which are working for community improvement and better human relations.
5. Welcome all the children in your community into your church school and let the evangelistic outreach of the church extend to all people.
6. Attend an institute. Our church helps to sponsor three racial and cultural institutes in different parts of the country and there are others which are recommended. The Commission will be glad to provide information to those who are interested.

Race Relations - A New Approach

By Chester L. Marcus

The audience was large, composed mostly of white Protestants. Those who were responsible for publicity had done an excellent job. The liberal and respected elements of the community had turned out to pay their annual tribute to those who constantly worked for the improvement of community understanding. The attractive Jewish lady had just finished her speech, which was one of the three. She had mentioned Haym Salomon, who had helped to finance the Revolutionary War and concluded by extoling the virtues of Bernard Baruch and Albert Einstein. I followed her to the platform and, following her pattern, I proceeded to give my argument (an argument it was), I clenched it with references to Booker T. Washington, Mordecai Johnson, Benjamin Mays, Marian Anderson, Jackie Robinson, and, of course, Ralph Bunche. Our conclusions were obvious; therefore, if these Negroes and Jews have so clearly demonstrated their worth and abilities, *you* ought to grant us equality.

We meant well, but perhaps our whole approach was wrong. In fact, the approach we used (which is typical) may in a long run be harmful to the cause of true brotherhood, notwithstanding the fact that some good is derived from most types of fellowship programs. This type of program tends to subconsciously deify the dominant group by giving it a false sense of lordship, as judge and dispenser of the privileges of the earth. Certainly the dominant group in our society needs no further exaltation. In fact, one suspects that much of the chaos in our world today stems from the unwitting tendency of the dominant group to feel and act superior, and that a great number of people around the world have begun to question the right of deification of the Anglo-Saxon people. To perpetuate this false feeling of

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Eilers

The Reverend Chester Marcus is greeted following his installation as Race Relations Secretary by Dr. Charles Enders, Professor Elmer Arndt, and the Reverend Howard Goeringer.

Race Relations - A New Approach

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superiority, while seeking to promote mutual respect, is unfortunate. The relationship of the judge and defendant is never equal, regardless of how benevolent the judge may be. Besides, Negroes would gladly give up the reflected glory of their famous men if they could find respect for their ordinary people, and the world did not burden them with the ignominy of their scoundrels.

Negroes often have the tendency to identify themselves with the righteousness of their protest against discrimination. This self-righteousness is a sin to be avoided, even by people who have just grievances. Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us that much of the self-righteousness of the protesting minority groups "is a righteousness which is not of God." Therefore the traditional type of courtroom-setting-race-relations program described above in the long run does harm to both majority and minority groups and could be advantageously replaced by a new approach.

The following steps are suggestive:

We begin with the basic fact that we are children of God: As God's children our rights as persons are bestowed by Him. In the light of His truth we are also sinners; our brotherhood is both in *sin* and in our common *need* for a mediator to make our peace with God, who is our common Father, and in *redemption* by Jesus Christ our common Savior. It has been said that "at the foot of the cross the ground is level," for there we all stand equally in need of God's grace.

All Christians know that every man has inherent rights granted by God in Creation. The state or dominant group may recognize and protect them, but it can never give or bestow them, because they are God-given and are a part of every man's birthright. Our founding fathers placed this truth in one of the great documents of this land. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Who would dare withhold from any man what God has given him in Creattion and what modern science has affirmed?

From this Creation we know that every man has intrinsic dignity and worth. Since this dignity and worth comes not with the place or circumstances in which one is born, but from God who made him in His image, the violation of any man's person is tantamount to defacing the image of God. The deepest insights of the Old and New Testaments affirm the fact that God loves all men, and that He gave His only begotten Son for their redemption in Christ. John put it this way, "If God so loved us we ought also love one another." When the scholar, Muretus, a seventeenth century fugitive from France, stood before the doctors in Lombardy to ask for aid, one of the doctors said in Latin, "Let us try an experiment on this worthless creature." To their great amazement the worthless creature replied in the learned tongue, "Will you call worthless one for whom Christ did not disdain to die?" Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick has reminded us that "When Christ dies for someone there must be something in him worth dying for. Christ died for every man, says the New Testament—at its best Christianity has reached out to those whom the world has treated as worthless creatures." We may say to all the racial bigots, "Will you call worthless and treat as worthless, 'one for whom Christ did not disdain to die?' "

Finally those who have not obtained all of their natural rights are under God's compulsion to strive for them, in the realization that this is His will for all men. Similarly, those who through no special merit of their own have enjoyed more of their natural rights have a moral responsibility to help to secure for others those same natural rights and privileges they claim for themselves. This would be following the Golden Rule. It is neither judicial in style nor paternalistic in nature, but the acting as responsible stewards of God, using constructively the opportunites and privileges He has placed at our disposal for the welfare of His children. Cooperation on this basis of stewardship, where each group contributes to the solution of racial tension according to its abilities, opportunities and privileges, cannot fail to lead to the kind of mutual respect, appreciation, and understanding needed by Christians. With the kind of approach indicated above it seems that we may begin to move more constructively to facing some of the practical problems involved in intergroup relations.

It is not enough that Christians should seek peace for themselves. They must seek justice for others. Great masses of people in many parts of the world are hungry for bread, and are compelled to live in conditions which mock their human worth. Does your church speak and act against such injustice? Millions of men and women are suffering segregation and discrimination on the ground of race. Is your church willing to declare, as this Assembly has declared, that this is contrary to the will of God and to act on the declaration? Do you pray regularly for those who suffer unjust discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, or political conviction?

Second Assembly—World Council of Churches, Evanston, 1954

The General Synod, committed as it is to a non-segregated church in a non-segregated community, especially commends those congregations, hospitals, and educational institutions within its entire constituency, which have found ways to eliminate the unbrotherly barriers of racial exclusiveness.

The General Synod further urges all of our congregations and institutions to take concrete steps beyond the bounds of their own respective constituencies to meet their obligation as Christians to minister to *all* people in the *whole* community and instructs the Commission on Christian Social Action and the Board of National Missions to find ways and means of assisting local congregations that face immediate problems of race relations.

The General Synod especially encourages our churches, as well as individual members, to work in every appropriate manner to end racial discrimination in opportunities for housing, education, employment, and other common rights of citizens in a free society.

General Synod Resolution—1954

Incidents of Interest in Race Relations

BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING

Herb Schafale of Marion, Illinois, desirous of doing home mission work in an interracial situation, felt that he could best gain some insights into minority problems by attending a Negro school for part of his education. After attending Catawba College for two years, Fisk University, in Nashville, Tennessee, granted him a scholarship. Other scholarship aid came from the National Scholarship Service and Fund. So Herb is now matriculated at Fisk, and writes, "I feel that an experience of interracial living is invaluable in understanding people who suffer from prejudice. I hope to gain a better understanding of another side of the racial picture. I wish many more white students could share the experience of interracial living."

INTEGRATED CHURCH IN NORTH CAROLINA

While most of the churches in North Carolina cling to segregation and state officials predict dire things if schools are desegregated, at least one Tarheel Baptist church has been completely integrated for 16 years. Although this textile town (Brookford) has no colored residents, Brookford Baptist Church, the Reverend W. C. Laney, white, pastor, has a colored choir leader, two colored singers and many lay members in its congregation. The minister invited colored persons to join his church 16 years ago and has been backed by his congregation ever since. Most criticism of the initial move has now disappeared.

NEGRO APPOINTED

The Reverend Myron Ross, of St. Louis, Missouri, first Negro to be ordained into the ministry of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, has been called by the Board of International Missions to missionary service in Japan. Since his graduation from Eden Seminary in 1953, Mr. Ross has ministered to a Community Church in Overland, Missouri.

INTEGRATION IN THE CHURCHES

Martha Memorial Church, New York City, has an integrated membership composed of whites and Negroes.

* * * *

Mr. Lawrence Jones, a Negro who is a senior at Oberlin, is serving as pastor of two of our Evangelical and Reformed Churches, St. John's near Alliance, Ohio, and East Homer near Homerville, Ohio. Both congregations requested the services of Mr. Jones.

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The membership of Wyeville Evangelical and Reformed Church in Wisconsin is composed of Indians and Caucasians. The Reverend Mitchell Whiterabbit is serving as pastor here as well as at Black River Falls.

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The Reverend James J. Thomas was recently installed as pastor of Mott Haven Dutch Reformed Church, New York. Mr. Thomas is the first Negro to serve this church.

TEXAS BAPTIST ACT

The Texas Baptist General Convention at Fort Worth passed a resolution urging members to "take the initiative on working out a Christian solution to the race problem." Dr. Fay Valentine, director of the Christian Life Commission, urged the convention not to add to the race problem. Said he, "God is watching. We cannot afford under God to sit around and whine."

EVANSTON RESOLUTION

The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches declared its conviction that any form of segregation based on race, color, or ethnic origin is contrary to the Gospel, and is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of man and with the nature of the Church of Christ.

The Assembly urges the churches within its membership to renounce all forms of segregation or discrimination and to work for their abolition within their own life and within society.

NEGRO CHURCH ACTS

Schools and colleges under the jurisdiction of the A. M. E. Zion Church have been ordered to amend their charters and rules to comply with the Supreme Court school decision.

PUBLIC SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

The picture of public school desegregation has been surprisingly positive and extensive in a number of communities. Out of two hundred school districts which have moved promptly toward desegregation only four have had any trouble.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Through our Race Relations office partial scholarships are being granted to Negro students attending the following Evangelical and Reformed Colleges: Heidelberg, Franklin and Marshall, Ursinus, Elmhurst, and Cedar Crest.

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The American Missionary Association of the Congregational Christian Churches recently announced that it had granted scholarships for college education to eighteen young people of Indian, Latin American, Eskimo and Aleut ancestry.

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In Washington, D. C. the Daughters of the American Revolution National Board awarded nursing scholarships to three Negro girls, the first such awards to be made to Negroes.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ACTS

United States Attorney General Herbert Brownell recently urged the Interstate Commerce Commission to issue a "blanket order" banning segregation on all the nation's interstate trains, buses and planes. He contended that travel restrictions are illegal under Federal law.

NEGRO ELECTED

Fred W. Martin, Negro, was recently elected to City Council in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

RACE RELATIONS MATERIALS

The Reverend Meryl Ruoss, Evangelical and Reformed minister directing the Department of Church Planning and Research for the Protestant Council of the City of New York, prepared the information on Spanish-speaking people for the Race Relations Sunday packet issued by the National Council of Churches.

ARKANSAS HOSPITAL ADMITS NEGROES

Negro doctors will be permitted to practice in the new St. Vincent's infirmary in Little Rock, Arkansas when the hospital opens in December, it was announced by Dr. Henry G. Hollenberg, the hospital's chief of staff.

ARMED FORCES COMPLETE INTEGRATION

The Defense Department announced this week that with the abolition of the

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Christian Community

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Hough Church Serves A Changing Community

At the close of World War II, when Japanese Relocation Centers were dissolved, Hough Avenue Evangelical and Reformed Church found in its community many new neighbors of different racial and cultural background who had found homes in Cleveland. The ministry of the church went out to these Christians of Japanese ancestry, and soon there was a Japanese Christian fellowship, which eventually became a part of the regular congregation.

At the same time a new racial group was moving into the community. These new neighbors were Negroes. Facing the implication of the Christian Gospel, the congregation decided that Negroes, too, should be included in the fellowship of the Hough Avenue Church. The Negroes came and became a part of the church and community life. The church serves the community without regard to race, color, or National origin.

Japanese-American, Negro, and Caucasian children came together in the Sunday Church School and Vacation Church School to play, learn, and worship together. Their parents meet together in a wide range of groups from the Young Mothers' Club to the "Old-timers" in the Golden Age Club. Negroes, Japanese, and Caucasians share in the leadership responsibilities of the church.

Two ministers and a parish worker combine their efforts to make this church one of the best examples of church integration in Greater Cleveland and the church is felt in the community, "for the community is in the church."

Truly the spirit of Christ has guided this church as it faced its challenge seeking always to give meaning to the well-known hymn,

"In Christ there is no East nor West,
In Him no South or North,
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth."

The Other Side of Racial Segregation

Much has been said and written about the ill effects of segregation upon the minority groups, but little has been said about its negative effects upon the majority group. As was recently pointed out in the *New York Times,* "Segregation is a two edged sword." It hurts the segregator as well as the segregated.

Most Americans are honest, decent, and fair minded and in most instances are motivated by what Gunnar Myrdal calls the "American Creed." Any action which causes one to violate that creed—as Christians we might say our faith—creates conflict within the individual. Thus it is that many white Christians are maintaining their community mores, in regard to the unjust treatment of minorities at the expense of their own peace of mind. Any social pattern, pressure, or law which compels people to live in violation of their conscience is detrimental to human personality. A healthy personality presupposes some degree of harmony between one's deepest beliefs and his actions.

Few of us realize the depth of frustration in the lives of many white Christians, which is born out of their understanding of the New Testament, and the open contradictions they see in their own religious fellowships. This dilemma leads one, at times, to a feeling of guilt but more often it leads to irrational justifications of unChristian behavior. Psychologists and human relations experts have yet to make clear the tragic effects this kind of action has upon mental health.

Dr. Fred Wentzel has reminded us that "the long history of segregation has perverted not only our attitudes, but also our minds. Because the separation of colored people from white people is the accepted pattern, and because it sustains our assumptions of white superiority, we make our mind the servant of our feelings and call natural what we know well enough is against human nature."

Finally, when we violate our principle, or our faith, at the point of race, we puncture the dikes of our personal morality and the effect of it flows into other areas of our life, thus weakening our moral defense at all points. The tragedy is deepened because our children and others whose lives we influence are adversely affected by our action.

"How deeply the white man's racial sinning affects his own soul is seldom recognized. The cultivation of contempt, however, scatters evil fruit in every direction. He who segregates sows poison in the soil of community life, and much of the ugly seed falls in his own yard."

Incidents of Interest in Race Relations

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last of the all-Negro units, integration has been carried out ahead of schedule. Who would have believed it ten years ago?

COLUMBIA STUDIOS DROP RACE TAG

Columbia studios agreed to drop the word "nigger" from dialogue in its new film, Bamboo Curtain. The word will be deleted from all prints.

ARKANSAS INTEGRATES TWO SCHOOLS

Arkansas has reported two examples of public school integration. Charleston and Fayetteville absorbed Negro students without any incident.

LUTHERANS INTEGRATE

The Lutherans have integrated churches in Detroit, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. They have plans for three others in Ohio cities, and two on the West Coast.

Book Notes

Now Is The Time by Lillian Smith. The book (published simultaneously by Viking and Dell publishing houses in cloth and paper bindings respectively) outlines a practical and daily job necessary to carry out the U. S. Supreme Court's decision against public school segregation.

Within These Borders by John R. Scotford, Friendship Press, New York, 1953, $2.00 per copy. The author sketches the vast panorama of the life of the Spanish speaking people in the United States, from the valleys of New Mexico to New York city. He deals with problems of race relations and social status of Mexicans and Puertoricans, and describes the role of the Protestant Church in ministering to their spiritual, educational and health needs.

UNESCO Reports, Department of State Publication, No. 5209, free. An appraisal of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization by United States delegates.